DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 266 668 FL 015 514

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TITLE Communicative Language Teaching in the Rural Areas: How Does One Make the Irrelevant Relevant?
PUB DATE 85
NOTE 23p.; In: Communicative Language Teaching. Selected Papers from the RELC Seminar (Singapore, April 23-27, 1984). Anthology Series 14 (FL 015 507).
PUB TYPE Viewpoints (120) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Classroom Communication; Classroom Techniques; *Communicative Competence (Languages); *Developing Nations; Educational Strategies; Elementary Secondary Education; *English (Second Language); Foreign Countries; *Relevance (Education); *Rural Areas; Second Language Instruction
IDENTIFIERS Philippines

ABSTRACT

Although Filipinos learned English rapidly when it was first introduced widely in the early twentieth century, English as a second language instruction in rural areas today is irrelevant to the population's needs, and it is learned slowly. Both teachers and pupils have a restricted code of language usage. An inquiry is needed into the characterization of the intermediate level of English competence, as well as of the advanced level. These levels are characterized by the ability to use English for conceptual enrichment and further learning in addition to basic communication. Three possible classroom approaches offer the means to make English relevant to rural pupils by creating a milieu where the use of English becomes spontaneous and natural rather than labored and studied. Some suggestions are the following: creating a subculture of English in a rural setting; creating a make-believe world in the classroom, much like that which occurred naturally in the early years of English- speaking presence; and creating a content-challenging milieu in the English-language classroom, a milieu that is currently confined to science, mathematics, and technology. However, broader social and political factors must be considered in order to make programming and methodology viable. (MSE)

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Communicative Language Teaching in the Rural Areas: How does One Make the Irrelevant Relevant?

ANDREW GONZALEZ

Introduction

The literature on second-language learning and teaching is replete with the topic of this seminar; it seems to me that in going from a highly formal structural approach to a communicative approach, we have merely rediscovered what the good teacher in class knew all along, that one does not learn any language until one actually uses it to satisfy a genuine need to talk about something important to oneself and to others.

The problem plaguing most of us in second language teaching in a Philippine context is one of spontaneity and naturalness. Most of our pupils are bilingual if not tri-lingual in the Philippine vernaculars; this relatively wide repertoire enables them to exploit the resources of these languages according to various social contexts and situations. While English is learned in school, for quite narrow domains and for speaking only with certain people, its use in other situations, especially in rural areas, would be strained and unnatural, in effect, artificial. How then can one communicate spontaneously and naturally in a code one does not normally use for practically any situation outside the classroom?

The word *relevant* has become a cliché in Philippine education, but it is proper to use it in this context, hackneyed as it is, for the plain and simple fact is that in the countryside, in the rural areas, English has become irrelevant at least in the short term and for immediate needs.

This sociological fact is a product of historical developments and societal evolution over the past forty years, roughly the period after the Second World War; it is a post-colonial phenomenon.

During the period of "Occupation" as some of our ultra-nationalists put it, English was one's natural tool for social mobility.

The advantages were palpable and immediate. With knowledge

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of the colonial master's tongue, one was in a position to be a middleman, one had access to the powers-that-be, eventually one enjoyed preference in terms of being first in line for the incentives or "goodies" that the masters offered. In the Philippines, five years after the Americans arrived, they were sending the first pensionados or government scholars to the United States for college. And Filipino youths of varying ages within the space of five years learned the new masters' tongue so well that they were recommended suitable for tertiary-level work in various colleges and universities in the United States. They returned as the new elites and became civil servants and middle-men between the local population and the minority government masters. And as the Filipinos took the first early steps towards some form of self-government, through membership in the Philippine Commission and through membership in the national assembly (1907, 1920), they soon learned and began to use English while maintaining Spanish.

The records of the civil service examinations (in Spanish and in English) showed the preferences — the numbers taking the examinations in Spanish drastically decreased to 1 per cent (almost zero) but continued to increase in English (see Gonzalez 1980:29).

The courts of law continued to use Spanish during the entire American Period but as a younger generation of lawyers trained at the University of the Philippines took over, they were English-dominant more than Spanish-dominant. In the halls of the National Assembly and later the House of Representatives dominated by a succession of speakers who never quite measured up to Osmeña's stature under the initial unicameral Assembly, and the Senate dominated by the charismatic Quezon, from the beginning to his presidency, one heard more and more English, less and less Spanish, although in private most of these leaders were more at home in Spanish than in English.

The rapidity of acquisition of English among the Filipino educated would constitute a unique case study, when one considers that in the first census (1903, reported in 1905) there were practically no English-speaking people; fifteen years later, in the census of 1918, the second census, among literate individuals ten years and above, 569,501 or 30.4 per cent were reported to speak English and 563,495 or 33.5 per cent males and 322,359 or 22.1 per cent females were reported to read and write English (Gonzalez 1980:27). Collantes

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(1977:14), based on the 1918 census, places the English-speaking population at 896,258 out of 10,314,310 or 9 per cent of the total population.

More of these interesting facts need further documentation, but this rapidity of acquisition is perhaps unique in colonial history, since when the Spaniards left the Philippines after more than three hundred years (1565–1898), the number of Spanish-speaking Filipinos was 978,276 out of 7,685,426 or 13 per cent of the population (Collantes 1977:14); this percentage in my estimation is overstated, given De la Cavada's figures for 1873: 144,463 out of 5,151,423 or 2.5 per cent Spanish speakers in 1873. Even with the establishment of the Normal School for teachers of Spanish after the Educational Reform of 1863, one doubts if the percentage of speakers of Spanish in the country could jump from 2.5 per cent to 13 per cent in thirteen years.

What cannot be doubted is the rapid acquisition of English in the Philippines: 9 per cent in 1918 (fifteen years after the coming of the Americans) to 27 per cent on the eve of Independence (census of 1939; see Collantes 1977:14). What the Spaniards were unable to do in more than three hundred years, the Americans did twice better in a period of 41 years!

Undoubtedly, the chief instrument for having accomplished this in the Philippines was the public school system, which was one of the first structures established by the Americans even before the Organic Act of 1902.

However, we have to find the dynamics which made language learning in school then possible, inspite of the relatively poor methodology and materials available and in use in the public schools of the Philippines then compared to what we have now. We have to explain the phenomenon of how it was that Filipinos learned to communicate in English, a language transplanted in a totally new environment, when today given better methods and better materials and a much more developed school system, communicative ability does not seem to be as readily attained. What was relevant then and what is irrelevant now?

Language Use in Philippine Classrooms

In a major study completed by Bonifacio P. Sibayan and his associates at the Language Study Center of the Philippine Normal

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[illegible] partially reported at the Regional Language Centre [illegible] on Interlanguage Processes in Language Learning and [illegible]ication in Multilingual Societies in 1982, there are some [illegible] observations on what is happening in Philippine classrooms these days.

Based on 991 classroom observations in selectively sampled schools (using stratified random sampling) in Metro Manila and Pasay, Rizal (Tagalog-speaking) and Iloilo City and Jaro, Iloilo (Hiligaynon-speaking), 711 critical incident reports of classes, and 247 questionnaires filled out by teachers, some very important findings were made on communication problems in today's Philippine classrooms.

In non-Tagalog areas in the Philippines, special difficulties (naturally) are presented in having to use two non-native languages (Tagalog-based Pilipino and English) to learn the content of different subjects, thus resulting in loss of instructional efficiency.

In classroom interaction, Tagalog pupils were enthusiastic when familiar subject matter was presented in Pilipino by Tagalog speakers; pupil to pupil interaction in Tagalog-speaking areas was of course in Pilipino.

However, in these Tagalog-speaking areas, when English questions were asked, the pupils responded in Pilipino even in subjects where English was supposed to be used; when the teachers insisted on English, a code-switching variety of English and Pilipino was used quite often or Pilipino with much borrowing from English (especially of loanwords).

Among these Tagalog-speaking pupils, in both rural and urban areas, the teachers and pupils were more relaxed in classes taught in Pilipino than in English, and of course, there was much interaction between teacher and pupil and pupil and pupil as long as the medium was Pilipino.

However, in non-Tagalog areas, the classes were more relaxed in English than in Pilipino but most relaxed in the vernacular. In these same non-Tagalog areas, both rural and urban, pupils gave one-word answers or incomplete sentences in Pilipino; the pupil-to-pupil interaction was in the local vernacular but the recitation was in English and when the recitation had to be in Pilipino, the pupils mixed English with it!

In explaining concepts, terminology, directions in English,

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resort to Pilipino or the vernacular had to be made; the same reason prevailed, i.e., for ease in discussions. On the part of the pupils in Tagalog-speaking areas, there was little effort to speak and learn English; in answering they used Tagalog even in mathematics and science, where English is required.

On the other hand, in non-Tagalog urban areas, most subjects supposed to be taught in Pilipino were taught in English, or if taught in Pilipino, there were shifts to English rather than the local vernacular since neither one (Pilipino or the vernacular) had the necessary pedagogical idiom for explaining more advanced concepts and principles.

In non-Tagalog rural areas, subjects to be taught in Pilipino were likewise taught in English, although here, for explanation and clarification, there were shifts to the vernacular, especially in science and mathematics.

By and large, in these classrooms, there was a predominance of teacher-talk; as the pupils grew older, in the upper grades, especially with the use of aids, there was more pupil participation.

What was alarming was that there was poor reading comprehension in both Pilipino and English in all sites; in Tagalog areas where classes were taught in Pilipino the subject matter was too simple.

I have dwelled on these details to give the reader a better picture of what is actually happening as far as communication is concerned in the Philippine classrooms presently under the Bilingual Education Scheme.

Thelma C. Santos (1984) under the mentorship of Andrew Gonzalez did a similar study in school year 1982–83 for only one region, a multilingual region speaking Tagalog, Kapampangan, Ilocano and Sambal (the last three Northern Philippine languages and the first a Central Philippine language in the Philippine family of languages). Based on classroom visitations of 5 per cent of the 2,390 schools in the region, which is composed of nine divisions and several provinces (Bataan, Zambales, Nueva Ecija, Tarlac, Pampanga, Bulacan), 120 schools were visited by a team; each grade level in a school was visited (Grades 1–4 for primary schools, Grades 1–6 for complete elementary schools) and three subject class as of each level were observed (English Language Class, Mathematics, and Science). There were a potential of nearly 2 000 classes and teachers

visited (120 schools x 4/6 grades x 3 subjects); however, since some grades had only one section, the same teacher was observed teaching three separate subjects. All in all over 1,270 teachers were observed interacting with their classes in 10–15 minute observation periods. A check-list of conversational turns was made and a sample of 180 classes was taped for in-depth analysis (Gonzales, in press, and Santos 1984).

It should be remembered that Region III (Central Luzon) while close to Metro Manila has not undergone the urbanization of Metro Manila; moreover, it is multilingual. Schools were classified into rural and urban schools (the latter in Olongapo [Zambales], Angeles City [Pampanga], and Cabanatuan City [Nueva Ecija]). Moreover, there were central schools in poblacions (centers of towns) and peripheral schools outside poblacions. In general, central schools even in rural areas show processes of urbanization more than peripheral schools.

What the in-depth observations show is that there is a dominance of Teacher to Pupil talk (7:3); that unlike Manila, as grade level progresses, there is more English used by teachers and pupils especially for English Language, Mathematics, and Science classes (in that order). What is remarkable here, in comparison with the Iloilo data of Sibayan (1982), is that while the pupils had other mother tongues besides Tagalog, if a local language had to be resorted to, it was always Tagalog, showing a high degree of bilingualism (vernacular and Tagalog) as well as the rapid spread and dominance of Tagalog-based Pilipino in this part of the country close to Metro Manila (known as Region III or Central Luzon).

However, even in this area, at least initially, when the pupils do not know enough English, Pilipino is used in supposedly English-medium subjects when the teacher gives directions or issues instructions for clarification (the use of Pilipino is through tags, conversation movers, attention callers) and for explaining content, to clarify a definition, a rule, a concept or generalization initially uttered in English.

The pupils in turn, when answering, resort to Pilipino words or explanations when they do not know the words in English or when they wish to ask a question but cannot express themselves with confidence in English.

What is remarkable about the data from Region III is that in

the provinces, in the upper grades, more English was used in Tagalog areas than in non-Tagalog areas; since these areas are closer to Pilipino-speaking Metro Manila, where based on the Sibayan data Pilipino is making more inroads, one would expect more use of Pilipino. Apparently, in Region III, the same trend does not exist as in Metro Manila, at least, not yet.

Morever, in these same regions, rural-urban differences for English and Pilipino usage were insignificant at the intermediate grades but at some grade levels, teachers in rural areas used more English than Pilipino when compared with teachers in urban areas, where Pilipino seemed more dominant. Undoubtedly, this is due to the fact that urban areas are melting pots of various ethnic speakers of their mother tongues both among pupils and teachers and that it is in these multilingual situations that a lingua franca such as Pilipino seems to be disseminated more rapidly.

In rural areas, Grades 1, 2 and 4 teachers in central schools used more English than those in complete elementary schools. Teachers in central and complete elementary schools in these rural areas also used more English than did teachers in primary schools (Grades 1–4) in all subjects; the best trained teachers are usually assigned to these same central and complete elementary schools.

By and large, pupils used more English (compared to Pilipino) than their teachers. This is deceiving, however, since the pupil responses were mostly one-word, phrase, formulaic answers, and only a small percentage were tokens of genuine communication. For practical purposes, there were no student-initiated questions and teachers tended to repeat their questions and explanations endlessly to elicit answers from the pupils.

In the analysis of questions asked, it was found by both Gonzalez and Santos that the intellectual level of questions was low; teachers asked questions calling for facts or paraphrases or general comprehension, seldom calling for the use of higher cognitive skills of application, analysis, synthesis, inference, evaluation, and creative supposition.

The order of frequency of question types in English Language Class and in Science Class was WHAT, YES-NO, WHO, and HOW MANY questions; the order of frequency was slightly different for Mathematics (for understandable reasons): WHAT, HOW MANY? YES-NO, WHO.

When queried about the present language situation in the classrooms of Region III, especially about the use of Pilipino in English-medium classes, administrators (principals, head teachers, teachers-in-charge) stated that the reasons for code-switching were: elicitation of quicker responses from the pupils, influence of the mass media where code-switching is extensively used, and quite alarming, teachers' lack of full competence in English and hence the necessity of having to resort to some other language besides English.

Presently, there are no nation-wide tests which have been given to teachers to gauge their English-language competence or for that matter their Pilipino language-competence. There have been nation-wide tests for science and mathematics (see Gonzalez 1983), which are rather anxiety-producing in showing the low level of competence among science and mathematics teachers in the country with regard to knowledge of subject matter. A general idea of competence may be obtained from scores of the professional examinations for teachers in the Philippines, which contain a language component (reading, lexical items in English, some grammar in Pilipino) which could be used as gauges, but since these tests are not equalized from year to year, no certain conclusions can be drawn.

What is obvious is that the teaching profession because of its poor compensation scheme and working conditions is not attracting the best talent in the country, and although the board of the National Testing Center of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports of the Republic of the Philippines has now raised the cut-off score for education students to 55%ile, from 45%ile initially a few years ago), the cut-off point is still rather low since the secondary school leaving examination has been found to be by and large quite easy and not discriminate at the upper levels. In any case, it is not an impression but a fact (although not fully quantified) that the best and the brightest of Philippine youth leaving secondary education do not go into education as a life's carrer. Hence, the quality of incoming recruits into the profession will continuously cast doubt in the future about their real competence in English, Science and Mathematics, in addition to doubts about their pedagogical skills.

I have dwelled at great length on the findings of these important studies since they spell out the background for the consideration of communicative language teaching in the Philippines. In dealing with the Philippines, and I suspect in dealing with any country where

comparable sociolinguistic conditions prevail, social and economic parameters differ so widely between city and country that one is faced with almost two types of situations. In rural areas, one set of condition prevails. In urban areas, a totally different set obtains. Specifically, in the rural areas, English has no immediate relevance, but it is not yet competing with Pilipino. On the other hand, in urban areas, Pilipino is gaining ascendancy; English is rapidly losing its dominant position. Moreover, by force of circumstances, metropolitan areas such as Manila present a situation where languages are in contact and where much code-switching between Pilipino and English takes place. However, metropolitan areas are likewise places where the relevance of a second language such as English is more evident.

The problems which obtain in the Philippines are undoubtedly comparable and of relevance to any other situation in some other ASEAN country where communicative language teaching (for English as a second or foreign language) is carried on among a mass base, throughout the country, in a setting less than ideal for language acquisition, and with a staff far from being fully qualified as language teachers to carry on English instruction, let alone creative communicative language teaching. However, most likely, inspite of the shortcomings in the competence in English of the average Filipino teacher in the rural schools, she is still a few rungs above her peer in other countries in the region similarly situated. (I have no basis for this observation other than impressionistic data.)

I dwell on these factors since the Philippine problem has extra-country relevance outside of its boundaries.

What this picture amounts to is th[illegible] here is communication going on in Philippine classrooms i[illegible]rms of quantity, the quality of this communication leaves much to be desired.

The level of teacher competence in terms of conceptualization and higher cognitive skills is low.

In turn, the pupils acquire mostly passive comprehension skills, not sufficient production skills, so much so that outside of one-word answers and pre-fabricated patterns, they have to resort either to Pilipino or the local vernacular to express themselves, either using local vocabulary or answering whole sentences in Pilipino or in the local vernacular, and when asking questions (rather seldom and infrequent), they do so in Pilipino or in the vernacular.

Both teachers and pupils seem to suffer from what Basil Bernstein would probably likewise call a "restricted code" and in my opinion the continuous use of this restricted code leads eventually to a form of cognitive poverty or deprivation. For the kind of question-and-answer technique being used seems to exist from Grade 1 to Grade 6, for all subjects. The form of questioning is found even in Grade 6, although as the pupils go up the ladder, there is more use of English in Region III and Region VIII (Iloilo) but more use of Pilipino in Tagalog-speaking areas. Moreover, even in non-Tagalog areas such as Region III, where most pupils are bilingual in Tagalog and the local vernacular, there is about 10 per cent code-switching (to Pilipino) even in Grade 6, especially in science subjects, which are heavy on content rather than skills.

What this seems to indicate is that pupils finishing elementary school are still linguistic infants as far as English is concerned; in an as yet incomplete and not fully analyzed study done by Gonzales *et al.* (forthcoming), it was found that outside of Manila, in rural areas of lower socio-economic background and even in Metro Manila in the poorer sections, a threshold level of basic communicative competence (using a criterion-referenced instrument based on Alexander and Van Ek 1980) is not attained even after six years of elementary schooling by some. Even if it were attained, at Grade 6 level, the basic competence is merely an introduction to the use of English as a medium through which to attain content and higher cognitive skills. For children in higher socio-economic brackets, this threshold level is attained by the third year of schooling, when instruction in English for more content is possible. However, for children of lower socio-economic status, this possibility does not obtain if ever until the secondary level, which, really leaves very little time for content.

What we need at present is an inquiry into the characterization of an intermediate level of English-language competence as well as of an advanced level, one characterized by the ability to use the second language not merely for basic communication but for further learning and conceptual enrichment and the attainment of the key concepts and controlling paradigms and operational principles of specific disciplines in basic fields such as literature, mathematics, science, social sciences (history, political science, economics, geography). What are the "signs" that a second language learner can now carry on this kind of "thinking" or "thinking in English" which

permits him to apply, analyze, synthesize, fer, evaluate, and creatively imagine in the new language? It is my experience in dealing with foreign language students even in graduate school, including Filipinos who have supposedly been educated in English and who could pass the TOEFL test without difficulty, that they are unable to abstract, to generalize, to go beyond basic findings to implications and then to abstract theoretical constructs from these generalizations and implications. What are the signs in elementary and secondary school for the beginnings of this intermediate or advanced level of communicative competence?

Perhaps a more basic question which must be asked is: How does one arrive at this level, assuming one has gone beyond the threshold level? We do not have the technology for this at present; in fact, we have not paid sufficient attention to it other than to label it as "intermediate" or "advanced" stage of foreign/second language learning.

Thus, what is upmost in the mind of the dedicated Filipino educator who sees the need for this competence for the rural folk (since it would be even more difficult to use a still uncultivated language like Pilipino for this even if he wants to) in a setting where there is no supportive English-speaking community outside the classroom and where the usually reinforcing agencies or components found in Metro Manila are lacking is a search for the means to bring about this advanced level of communicative competence.

For the plain and simple fact is that in the short term, English is quite irrelevant to our children outside of Metro Manila, even in the urban centers outside of Manila. How is one to speak of communication and to stimulate a desire to *communicate in English* (the second or foreign language) when there is precious little use for English in his environment in Tarlac, Nueva Ecija, Zambales, Bulacan, Bataan, unless he lives close to Clark Airbase in Angeles, Pampanga or to Subic Naval Base in Olongapo, Zambales, where the need to communicate in English has immediate relevance and rewards in terms of profitable interaction with English speakers.

Outside of these two areas, where there is a large English-speaking minority offering incentives both financial and social, there is no English-speaking community anywhere else unless of course one lived in the more urbanized areas, the capitals; even here the use of English would be minimal, only in certain restricted domains

(offices), for certain topics (business, technical, scientific) and only with certain professionals (legal, medical, commercial at the highest levels). Most interaction, in these places must still be carried on in the local vernacular (even with the doctor, the priest, the lawyer) for informal transactions or in Pilipino (with a non-native or an immigrant living in the place or with a stranger passing by) (see Dumanan 1980 and Fabregas 1982).

Even in the mass media, especially for prime time viewing (see AIJ 1983) much programming is now in Pilipino, with little or none in the vernacular, and with English still used during approximately 40 per cent of transmission time and of prime-time. However, most programs in English are watched only in urban areas since what are most popular elsewhere are the local movies, all in Pilipino at present.

Thus for practical purposes, the problem of the English-language teacher and even the Pilipino-teacher in a non-Tagalog area, will be to re-create in the classroom in a period of something like three hours a day (the time allotted each day for English Language, Mathematics, Science) an ecology or an environment where communication (initially basic, subsequently focused on specific fields calling for different registers) will stimulate, reinforce English-language use in as spontaneous and natural a way as possible and at an advanced level to create "new" learning (following Krashen's [1981] input hypothesis).

Making the Irrelevant Relevant

Based on the Philippine case, a case which undoubtedly will find parallels in other countries of ASEAN, what is one to do in terms of language programming and implementation?

Undoubtedly, wherever English is used extensively in the lower grades, taught as a subject and/or used as a medium of instruction, a similar situation exists if one is faced with inadequately prepared teachers whose own competence in English leaves much to be desired, whose ability to conceptualize higher cognitive content in English is limited, and if one is faced with rural children who see little immediate use for the language in a social milieu without a supportive English-speaking community and without tangible incentives and rewards presently to motivate the students to learn and to use English. Moreover, outside of the somewhat artificial milieu of the

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English-language classroom (as a content subject or as a medium of instruction), the dominant language is the local language, Pilipino or the vernacular, and English is not heard or used elsewhere. Among themselves, at an informal level, the teachers themselves use the local language; among pupils, the same obtains; and outside, teacher-pupil interactions themselves are in the local vernacular. There are no mass media contacts with English, except through the newspapers and an occasional movie in town.

Moreover, there is tremendous peer pressure, both among the teachers and among the pupils, *not* to use English; in fact, if one were to use English instead of the local vernacular, one would be thought unusual, isolated, elitist, and perhaps a show-off! The presence of the Thomasites or the native speaker of English as supervisor or superintendent which made the earlier use of English natural no longer obtains. At best, one has missionaries in the barrios these days who are themselves probably not native speakers of English but some European language and with whom one uses English as a lingua franca.

Outside the classroom, again with both teachers and pupils, the domain of English for practical purposes does *not* exist. In the barrios and in rural areas, where expensive stores and offices demanding the use of English are not found, one has no real occasion to use English. The few movies which come to the poblacion are usually in Pilipino rather than in English; in these areas, there is still no access to television (the Asian Institute of Jounalism 1983 surveys show only 2 million TV households in the whole country of 52 million, 70 per cent of them in Luzon). At best, newspapers come late; they are probably the only contact in English. Most households would not spend money for a newspaper, but they will pass around komiks in Pilipino. There will hardly be any foreigners coming to town; hence, the other domain of English, international contacts, would not exist. One will speak English with the English supervisor and perhaps with one's superiors — as far as the teachers are concerned. With the pupils, occasions for English use are nil, since the domains of English, business and international relations, are even more non-existent for pupils than for teachers.

Hence, for practical purposes, the natural uses of English in a rural context in the Philippine setting would be confined to the artificial classroom milieu, between four walls, in the English

Language class and under present policy in the Mathematics and Science classes.

A comparable situation exists in the hinterlands of Malaysia and of Indonesia and the villages of Thailand, and except for better access to the mass media in a highly urbanized society, the same situation would probably exist for the tenements of Singapore. Certainly, the occasions for English use are even fewer in Hong Kong, where the dominant language is Cantonese and where even Mandarin had a difficult time surviving!

Under these circumstances, many of the new methodologies and approaches become irrelevant. Lozanov's (1978) suggestopedia demands an expensive milieu for any kind of learning; perhaps some of the total physical response activities of Asher (1977) would work but then these would be only at the initial stages of language learning. Undoubtedly, too, some of the techniques of Gattegno's (1969) *Silent Way* and its emphasis on listening would find application but again, only at the initial levels of language learning. The community counselling techniques of Curran (1976) might provide novelty and moments of interest among youngsters: perhaps with the aid of better students, one can use some of the community counselling techniques even in the upper levels. But many of these techniques, as Sibayan (personal communication) points out, are really only for the first stages of language learning. They do not reach the heart of the problem, the transition to the use of English as a medium of instruction and not merely basic communication. The natural method (Krashen and Terrell 1983) or an adaptation of the content of situation method and finding natural ways of wanting to say something to someone in English in a rural setting seems to be a more feasible approach.

Some Suggestions

The following suggested approaches, based on observations of some successful situations in the Philippines, might find application not only in the rest of the country but elsewhere, in similar social contexts. They are offered merely as possible avenues towards making the irrelevant relevant. Ultimately, they try to re-create in a social situation a situation where the use of English becomes natural and spontaneous rather than labored and studied.

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Creating a Subculture of English in a Rural Setting

In some cases, in the Philippines, in university and college communities, as a result of historical factors which have become part of tradition, one encounters academic communities where English is naturally used. We need in-depth sociolinguistic analyses to discover the factors (economic, social, cultural, anthropological, historical, perhaps even political) that have created such mini-communities and subcultures and perhaps even more important that have maintained them.

I am thinking specifically of situations such as Silliman University in Dumaguete City (a Cebuano-speaking community), La Salle College in Bacolod (a Hiligaynon-speaking community), the Easter School in Baguio (an Ilocano and Northern Philippine languages speaking community). Without doubt, there are many more examples; I cite these three only because I have had personal contacts with these communities. Certainly, in the provinces that used to be called the Mountain Province (now subdivided into the provinces of Benguet, Bontoc, Ifugao, Kalinga-Apayao), among tribal minorities for the most part culturally isolated from the lowlands and speaking several Northern Philippine languages but with Ilocano as a lingua franca, one finds an eagerness, a pride, a taken-for-granted vigorous attempt to speak English and to speak it well. In the academic communities earlier mentioned, one might almost say that within the academic community, a kind of standard prevails, a kind of in-community "accent" or manner of speaking which is markedly different from the "accent" used outside. In Manila, before the War and after the War until the 1960s, one spoke of an Arrneowww (Ateneo) accent, which is now lost. The accent is not quite as distinctive at Dumaguete, Bacolod, or Baguio, but there is enough differentiation from the first-language influenced variety of English prevalent in these communities to differentiate the local educated English from a kind of Philippine English which would not be quite an intelligible outside and in international circles.

We need to isolate the factors which have created this situation over time and which maintain the situation. Clearly, in the case of the Ateneo de Manila University phenomenon, the main cause of the loss of the 'Ateneo-accent' was probably the nationalistic movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s which made such an accent suspect. Moreover, the presence of American Jesuits and specifically the in-

fluence of a charismatic teacher of [illegible] this earlier milieu; as the American Jesuits retired and as the presence of this charismatic teacher no longer made itself felt, [illegible] began to prevail. Too, the larger intake of students at the [illegible] level, no longer from the Ateneo High School (where the "accent" prevailed or began to be acquired) created a kind of [illegible] In any case, it no longer exists.

But when one comes upon students and [illegible] University in Dumaguete, La Salle College in Bacolod, and Brent School in Baguio, one does usually come upon a variety of the English language which is quite impressive because of easily recognizable. One suspects that what keeps this accent going is the continuing presence of native-speakers of English (now much diminished but no longer occupying key administrative positions) with whom there is enough interaction and among whose pupils (now faculty members and administrators of the university) this accent still finds use. Unobtrusively, one still expects "good English" spoken on campus, in-spite of the reports about "deterioration", and the accent somehow persists.

One suspects too that in the mountain provinces, English is not competing with filipino, the way it is in the lowlands, especially in the Metro Manila area. The Northern Philippine provincial person feels secure with his own vernacular and with Ilocano, his lingua franca. He speaks English with the tourists and the foreigners who continue to visit the area and he accepts the fact that since English is a foreign tongue and must be learned as such, he speaks the language the way the foreigners speak it (as much as he can approximate the standard) so as to be able to carry on business with the foreigner and sell his goods without hang-ups arising from nationalism and the desire to create an indigenous Philippine variety of English.

Moreover, institutionally, in hotels in Metro Manila, in restaurants and in shops which cater for the most part to the foreign community, there is an unconscious linguistic accommodation to speak a more standard form of American English (the one the speaker heard he was supposed to use in school) based on mercantile motivations and, in the case of some, motivation to advertise one's availability as a suitable spouse for a foreign partner.

The problem then is: Is it possible to create such a milieu and the acceptance of such a standard in an isolated barrio school where

no comparable motivation exists and more important where no contact with a foreigner is possible?

One thinks not. The standard of the teacher most likely will not be good since it is not the best teachers who get assigned or who accept these hardship posts.

Since the presence of a native speaker (perhaps one is sufficient, depending on the frequency and quality of the contacts) seems to be the key factor in the situations already mentioned and even in the system during the days of American Occupation, then it may be that one way of bringing about a suitable standard will be to invite the lone foreigner in the community to spend some hours a week interacting with the students in an informal setting where communication can take place without self-consciousness. The missionary (Catholic or Protestant) who may happen to be in the area, or the Peace Corps volunteer who lives in town, could perform this function. In areas around American enclaves such as Subic in Zambales and Angeles in Pampanga, getting volunteers to do this kind of work should be quite simple and without expense. In the mountain provinces and in mining areas in Zambales and Davao and in large logging concessions in Northern Mindanao, plantations in Central and Southern Mindanao, multinational branches in various areas, such foreigners may be found — if not the man himself, then members of his family. Surely, some form of volunteer work interacting with the locals would not be an imposition and would create the milieu for this kind of creative interaction, which will probably spell the difference between language maintenance and language attrition or even language death.

Creating a Make-believe World in the Classroom

Much harder to bring about would be the creation of a make-believe world in the classroom where English becomes natural. However, one can take courage and motivation in the fact that this has been done in the Philippines ever since English was first taught on these islands. It is just that the task is so much harder to do these days because of the changed social and political situation in the country.

How does one bring about what the poet Coleridge would call "a willing suspension of disbelief" within the classroom so that the pupils can be persuaded to make-believe temporarily that inside the

English classroom, English will be the medium of discourse even for such everyday native realities as greetings, saying goodbye, taking a meal. In composing one's syllabus and one's materials, a modification of the usual inventory of situations is needed, since one seldom goes to a post office in this country (not even in Manila); one does not use English at table and ask someone to pass the bread and the jam since one eats dried fish and fried rice at breakfast; neither does one go around sitting at home and talking English to one's mother or father.

I think that the atmosphere of "let's pretend" should be brought into the classroom right away and then the children can take on different personae for whom the use of English is natural. As long as the children and especially the older students know that they are enacting a ritual, presenting a drama or a skit — role-playing, in other words — then the role which calls for the use of English becomes natural within the frame of reference of that make-believe world.

Thus, Filipinos have no trouble adopting a totally British or American pronunciation — with naturalness and without self-consciousness — if they are singing the song of a music idol. In fact, for rock, country music, and jazz, assuming a Cockney accent or a mid-Western twang or even a Southern drawl becomes natural, because simulated. To me, one viable alternative is to exploit music as a medium of teaching, since the influence of Western popular music, British and American, is pervasive even in the barrios. Another activity would be the presentation of skits, playlets, dramas which call for role-playing. In these circumstances, English is natural and a foreign standard likewise easily acceptable.

Hence, variety shows, amateur hour programs, a sequence of song and dance numbers, recitatives, skits should be natural activities done on a regular basis by all English classes.

Still another mode of discourse in English which becomes natural would be parliamentary procedure and debates, which though actually in use only in Manila and in the National Assembly (Batasang Pambansa) can be undertaken as simulated exercises; make-believe courts of law, where English is still used even in the provinces, are likewise viable situations calling for role-playing; these activities have much appeal for young people.

If in ordinary discourse outside of these role-playing situations

the student reverts to his more natural mode of speaking, at least one has given him the resource to use a more internationally accepted standard when the situation calls for it in the future. When young people from the provinces are forced by circumstances in Manila or abroad to use English naturally, they do so without hesitation and with much success. The mastery of another variety of Philippine English is there and can be called upon as a resource at some future date when its use becomes natural and not merely a situation of role-playing. I have seen this bidialectalism work with many of my former students from the provinces, now living in Metro Manila.

Creating a Content-challenging Milieu in the Classroom

I am convinced with many others that a formerly occupied colony will lose its mastery of the colonial language — even among the elites — once it ceases using the colonial language as a medium of instruction and relegates it merely to be a language subject to be studied.

To me, once a policy like this is adopted, it will spell language death for the colonial language. I do not challenge the rationale for the decision; for political reasons, one may need to make such a policy decision, but one must live with the consequences of such and not be naive and expect that one can maintain the colonial language for international use with the country's elite through an arrangement in effect resulting in language attrition. Hence, a bilingual education policy, with its many permutations, is perhaps the only viable compromise if one wishes to maintain competence in the colonial language at least among an elite and for one's business and international contacts. If one does decide to maintain the colonial language, then one must reserve at least some content subjects to continue to be taught in it.

In the Philippines, the policy decision is to keep the domains of science, mathematics and technology under English. Our actual classroom use, based on the data reported in the first part of this paper, indicates that initially, we have to use the local vernacular or Pilipino as a crutch, under the euphemism of "auxiliary language", but as the student continues in the system, the use of English becomes almost exclusive especially in non-Tagalog areas where English is not in competition with Pilipino. Moreover, the data likewise indicate that there is less code-switching going on in

Mathematics but more code-switching in Science even in the upper grades, although the Pilipino proportion is relatively small (about 10 per cent); again this holds true for the most part in non-Tagalog speaking areas, where English is not in competition with Pilipino.

In Science and Mathematics, as the years go on, the subject matter of these subjects becomes more abstract and less tied to Philippine realities. It does not become unnatural then to speak of subparticle physics in English, for it would be even more unnatural to attempt to do so in Pilipino, at least in the present state of development of Pilipino.

At this advanced level of learning, Scientific English and English for Specific Purposes become natural components of programming, especially at the secondary levels and even in the upper elementary school years. What seems to be important in these areas is to speak of scientific and mathematical topics, content areas that are intrinsically interesting to a young person and an adolescent. One can then speak of scientific realities and principles, using readily accessible materials. In the area of literature, one should resist the temptation to turn the classics (which are recorded in a historically different dialect of English); at least for these years one must stay with modern English and in the genres and forms and types of literature appealing to young people: espionage, detective stories, romance.

These materials may not be easily accessible because of budgetary restrictions. One must then use the most accessible source, the daily newspaper, as well as excerpts from old books (obtainable through Asia Foundation book grants), movie magazines, old periodicals, comic books.

Above all, these topics must be discussed in group work; group dynamics techniques for personal growth problems should be used. Here the community learning model of Curran (1976), really based on group dynamics techniques, lends itself easily as a technique of communicative teaching.

In line with Krashen's (1981) input hypothesis, one must not be afraid to challenge the students with higher cognitive "thought" questions and to expose them to more difficult samples of language so as to induce the language acquisition device to revise its internal grammar.

As enrichment activities under this approach, discussions of

movies, books, contemporary events lend themselves to the natural use of higher order language which will then stimulate language growth and mastery, for again it would be even more unnatural to use an uncultivated language such as Pilipino for these tasks.

Summary and Conclusions

Under the three types of approaches I have suggested, specific suggestions (for example those in Littlewood 1980 and Blair 1982) for actual classroom use can be implemented according to the age and level of competence of the students. The key is to create natural situations in the classroom which spontaneously call for communication in English.

However, as this paper points out, there are larger social and political factors which must be considered to make any kind of programming and methodology truly viable.

The problems called attention to are systemic and structural, and are typical of similar situations in other countries where the social and teaching conditions have parallels. They cannot be solved by microsolutions to problems but have to be tackled at a more systemic and higher level.

Always, however, we must be relevant — and natural — even if our tasks seem hopelessly irrelevant!

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